

Mr. Chair,

My name is John Ashmore. I support House Bill 607.

I worked for the Department of Military Affairs/Montana National Guard up until January 9, 2015. I was a state worker who was threatened, intimidated, bullied, and the final act of retaliation was termination of my job.

Before April 2013 I was considered to be an exemplary employee by my leadership. They were impressed with my knowledge, skills and abilities, and they depended on me for my expertise.

In April 2013 the leadership changed. I tried to explain to the new leadership proper execution of federal funds which are designated for a specific state program. I was told by this new leadership "When federal money comes to the state, we can do whatever we want to with it." After this statement, the waste, fraud and abuse increased.

Less than a year after the new leadership started overseeing my program, Montana National Guard leadership with the help of State Human Resources began writing disciplinary actions based on lies against me and my coworker. When we requested mediation through State Human Resources, my coworker was told not to ever contact them again.

My coworker and I were dedicated employees who collectively brought into the State of Montana over \$400,000 in a two-year endeavor and saved the state over \$175,000 by installing equipment instead of contracting it out. Less than a year after the first disciplinary action, my coworker and I were both terminated on January 9, 2015 in the same meeting at the same time. At the time of my termination, all of my personal papers were seized by National Guard leadership and HR in an attempt to thwart the impending lawsuit.

My coworker and I have both been banned from going onto Fort Harrison unless accompanied by armed guards. This is a designation usually reserved for people who are criminals, terrorists, or have extreme mental problems to the point they may constitute a danger to themselves and others. My coworker is a veteran, I hold a secret clearance, and he holds a top secret clearance. In my entire career of 42 years in the security industry I have never been treated so dishonorably.

I have not been able to find a job, and unemployment insurance has been repeatedly denied to me because of the Department of Military Affairs protest. This has created a severe financial hardship for me and my family.

I respectfully request that you do what you can to protect state workers from the corruption that exists in the upper echelon of at least one agency of our great state. Stopping the corruption in the state agencies will also save the state and the taxpayers a lot of money in legal expenses.

Thank you,



John Ashmore